

Remarks

Reconsideration and allowance of the subject application are respectfully solicited.

Claims 1-4, 6, 10 and 23 are now pending in the application, with Claims 1 and 23 being independent. Claims 45 and 46 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 1 and 23 have been amended herein.

Claims 1-4, 6, 10, 23, 45 and 46 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,012,809 (Ikeda et al.) in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,149,327 (Ward et al.). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

As is recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention relates to an image recording apparatus for recording an image by applying a coloring material on a recording medium. The apparatus includes recording means, conveying means, setting means and control means. The recording means applies the coloring material in accordance with image data. The conveying means conveys the recording medium so as to permit recording on both a first recording side and a second recording side of the recording medium. The conveying means includes a plurality of conveying paths. The setting means variably sets a length of time between an end of recording on the first recording side of the recording medium and a start of recording on the second recording side of the recording medium in accordance with the image data for recording on the first recording side of the recording medium. The control means controls a conveying operation by the conveying means such that recording on the second recording side of the recording medium by the recording means is started after passage of time set by the setting means. The control

means switches the conveying paths for conveyance in accordance with the time set by the setting means.

As is recited in independent Claim 23, the present invention relates to an image recording method for recording an image by applying a coloring material on a recording medium in accordance with image data by recording means. The method includes the steps of conveying the recording medium so as to permit recording on both a first recording side and a second recording side of the recording medium, the conveying step utilizing a plurality of conveying paths, variably setting a length of time between an end of recording on the first recording side of the recording medium and a start of recording on the second recording side of the recording medium in accordance with the image data for recording on the first recording side of the recording medium and controlling a conveying operation of the recording medium such that recording on the second recording side of the recording medium by the recording means is started after passage of time set in the setting step. The controlling step switches the conveying paths for conveyance in accordance with the time set in the setting step.

Support for the amendments to the claims can be found in the specification at least at page 32, lines 10-15. Of course, the claims are not intended to be limited in scope to this preferred embodiment.

With the above arrangement and method, if the variably set length of time between recording on the first and second sides of the recording medium is long, a long conveyance path can be used, whereas if it is short, a short conveying path can be used.

As discussed previously, the ink jet recording method and apparatus of Ikeda et al. can operate in single- or two-sided recording modes. For two-sided recording, after recording on a front side, the recording medium is conveyed by way of reversible conveying path 34, reversible pocket portion 35 and reconveying passage 36 back to the recording position for recording on the rear side. However, not only does Ikeda et al. not disclose or suggest variably setting a time length between recording on the first and second recording sides, but also fails to disclose or suggest a plurality of conveying paths and the conveying paths are switched in accordance with a set time between an end of recording of the first recording side and the start of recording on the second recording side, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 23.

Thus, Ikeda et al. fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

The ink jet printing apparatus of Ward et al. includes a duplex handling system in which a media sheet awaits at an output region 122 for an estimated drying time before being reconveyed or before a new sheet is fed. However, Ward et al. is also not believed to disclose or suggest a plurality of conveying paths or switching the conveying paths in accordance with the set time. Accordingly, Ward et al. fails to remedy the deficiencies of Ikeda et al. noted above with respect to independent Claims 1 and 23.

Thus, independent Claims 1 and 23 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejection are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1 and 23. Dependent Claims 2-4, 6

and 10 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in their respective independent claims. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

This Amendment After Final Rejection is an earnest attempt to advance prosecution and reduce the number of issues, and is believed to clearly place this application in condition for allowance. This Amendment was not earlier presented because Applicant earnestly believed that the prior Amendment placed the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, entry of this Amendment under 37 CFR 1.116 is respectfully requested.

Applicant submits that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the rejection set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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